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## **The Establishment of a Car-Based Leisure Regime in Twentieth Century Europe**

*Appropriating the automobile for mass consumption in Denmark, Italy and the Soviet Union*

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# **The Establishment of a Car-Based Leisure Regime in Twentieth Century Europe**

## **-Appropriating the automobile for mass consumption in Denmark, Italy and the Soviet Union**

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Over the last years there has been a distinctive shift in the history of technology from a focus on the production to a focus on the consumption of technology. As a result of this shift the analytical perspective has changed from producers to consumers as actors in the social construction of technology. It may be proper to speak of a ‘new cultural turn’ in the history of technology taking place under the headline ‘Users matter’ with the intention of investigating the role of the consumer in the appropriation of technology through mass consumption. The new cultural turn is based on the thesis that inventors and producers from the outset may have had clear intentions with the development of a new technology and explicit expectations regarding its use. But when consumers begin to appropriate the technology and (mis)use it for different purposes the new technology will be embedded in society with all the social effects it has in different fields of life. The leading questions in the new cultural turn are concerned with the fashion of consuming technology, how consumers modify, domesticate, redesign and reconfigure or even resist the use of a certain technology.<sup>1</sup>

The consumer and user perspective on the social construction and reconstruction of technology turns leisure life into the primary field of research for the analysis. In our work life we produce all the consumer goods later on to be consumed in our leisure time, be it alone or in the

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<sup>1</sup> Ruth Oldenziel, Adri Albert de la Bruheze, (eds.): *Manufacturing Technology, Manufacturing Consumers. The making of Dutch Consumer Society*. Amsterdam, 2009; Mikael Hård, Andrew Jamison, red.: *The intellectual appropriation of technology. Discourses on Modernity, 1900-1939*. Cambridge, Mass., 1998; Mikael Hård, Andrew Jamison: *Hubris and Hybrids. A cultural history of technology and science*. London, 2005; Ronald Kline, Trevor Pinch: Users as Agents of Technological Change: The Social Construction of the Automobile in the Rural United States. *Technology & Culture*, Vol. 37, No. 4, Oct 1996, s. 763-795; Nelly Oudshoorn, Trevor Pinch: *How Users Matter. The Co-Construction of Users and Technologies*. Cambridge, Mass., 2003.

company of family and friends seeking pleasure and creating ‘the good life’ by the consumption of technological artefacts. The consumer perspective requires a ‘bottom up’ approach to the historical analysis of technological development combined with the ‘top down’ perspective on the history of the producer. This means that the consumption regime formed by the producers of technology, state agency policies and the dealers advertising and marketing activities must be combined with the technology-pull from consumers in the analysis of the junction for the mediation and consumption of technology. The mediation junction typically consists of arenas or forums where mediators from the state, consumers with their organizations and producers from industry and trade meet and negotiate the conditions for appropriating a new technology. The consumption junction typically consists of arenas or forums that will represent the new technology through public display in advertisements, magazines and exhibitions etc. Here the good life is appropriated through images of the artefacts consumed in connection with leisure activities and family life.<sup>2</sup>

In this respect middleclass family life in late modern society is organized around leisure and consumption with the primary purpose of recreation. This kind of behaviour may be an American invention from the beginning of the 20. Century but it was adapted in Europe beginning with the interwar years and later it boomed on a mass scale after World War 2. The ideological turn from production to consumption as the key to economic progress transformed American society during the cold war period into what has been dubbed ‘the Consumers Republic’.<sup>3</sup> One of the main questions to be discussed in this article is whether American ideas of leisure and consumption was imported directly from the U.S. or were reconfigured and domesticated in different national styles by the European countries through national and international mediation junctions.

A central technology for leisure and consumption is the family car, it is used to enhance mobility and as a symbol of status in the private sphere. The private automobile has diffused on a massive scale during the century, reaching a volume that has had gigantic influence on the development of mobility in late modern society. The individual mobility and the freedom of choice is essential to the leisure culture of mass consumption and the expensive automobile was supplemented by other and cheaper means of transportation technology such as motorcycles and scooters.

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<sup>2</sup> Ruth Schwartz Cowan: The Consumption Junction: A Proposal for research Strategies in the Sociology of Technology. In W. E. Bijker, et al (eds.): *The Social Construction of Technological Systems*. Cambridge, Mass. 1987; Victoria de Grazia: Changing Consumption regimes in Europe, 1930-1970. In S. Strasser, et al. (eds.): *Getting and Spending European and American Consumer Societies in the Twentieth Century*. Cambridge, 1998; Victoria de Grazia: *Irresistible Empire. Americas Advance through 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Europe*. Cambridge, Mass., 2005.

<sup>3</sup> Lizabeth Cohen: *A Consumers Republic. The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America*. New York, 2003.

Was the automobile intended from the outset to be a practical and useful means for work and transportation, or was it on the contrary an article of luxury and a toy for leisure activity. This is a very potent political question that has been discussed ever since the first automobiles hit the road and till this day. Depending on the answer is a whole range of mediated solutions in society, concerning infrastructure, resources, regulation and in extreme cases even the prohibition of the spread of the automobile. Who shall pay for the show, is it society at large or the drivers through fierce taxation of the automobile. To this comes the whole question of the access to use the automobile as you may wish, and go where ever you want to without hindrances or limitations, this demands a never ending expansion of roads and service institutions for the automobile and it's passengers. The very costly development of the infrastructure is one of several important political questions raised by the expanding use of automobiles. These are some of the crucial questions that have been under permanent negotiation in the mediation junction since the beginning of the 20.Century.<sup>4</sup>

And these are the types of questions under investigation in the following three chapters with a focus on the history of modern leisure life in three European countries: Denmark, Italy and the Soviet Union with very different paths to the era of mass consumption of automobiles.

### **“Gentlemen, we drive to do the tour” - Touring in and out of Denmark by car**

The Danish automobile culture was from the outset based on a regime of leisure consumption. A driving force in the development of this popular leisure culture was the major Danish automobile organisation of United Danish Motor Owners FDM (Touring Club de Danemark). This union of Danish motor owners quickly evolved into the largest and most influential consumer-organisation in the country by creating a mediation and consumption junction for automobiles. The prime mover in the creation of this mechanised consumer culture for leisure was touring by car.

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the way the automobile was introduced and promoted as a vehicle for modern leisure life in Denmark 1920-1970. The main question is how a Danish automobile culture developed both an infrastructure for leisure car travel and a mentality of automobile wandering. The mechanised leisure culture of automobiles is not well researched and described in Danish historiography but it must be divided in three stages. The early stage 1900-1920 is covered by some memoirs of participants and a couple of interesting but not very analytical

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<sup>4</sup> James J. Flink: *The Automobile Age*. Cambridge, Mass., 1988.

history books.<sup>5</sup> The next two stages 1920-1950 and 1950-1970 is covered a bit closer by some historians, but only as a context to the history of transportation, infrastructure especially the building of roads and bridges or specific institutions related to the consumption of automobiles in Denmark. As a consequence of this deficiency in sources the contemporary Motor magazines and automobile literature must be used as primary source to the history of the automobile in Denmark.<sup>6</sup>

The primary source to investigate the leisure activities of the leading Danish motorist organisation FDM, founded in 1909 as a consumer organisation, is the member magazine MOTOR that already started in 1906 writing articles about “everything that runs on a motor”. The purpose of automobile wandering was clearly stated in an editorial in Motor already in 1908: “When the modern automobile tourist is travelling, as already expressed by the term, it is to get to look around, to get to know new people and new conditions. To what degree this is possible to do by automobile, we don’t have to tell our readers. Everyone who’s tried Grand touring by automobile knows how different and much more intimately you get to know the nature and the population from the open seats of the tourist automobile than in the long corridors of the international express train. Internationalism is the essence and the most important characteristic of modern automobile culture”.<sup>7</sup>

From the outset FDM took the leading role as a consumer lobby in the development of an automobile mediation and consumption junction where matters of information and advertising, car service and infrastructure, the exhibition of cars and other paraphernalia, insurance policies, the establishment of a travel agency for organising car holidays abroad, transportation policies, traffic laws, road and bridge construction, traffic education and tax policies were negotiated. FDM quickly achieved the leading position as the representative of Danish motor owners and has retained the status as the largest and most influential consumer organisation now for more than a century while the number of motor owners skyrocketed and the rate of memberships grew to over 250.000 after 1970.

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<sup>5</sup> Alfred Nervø: *Ti Aar bag Rattet. Fra Automobilernes og Motorcyklernes Barndomsaar*. (Ten Years behind the Wheel. From the childhood of automobiles and motorcycles). Kbh., 1919; Erik Mader, Ole Ravn: *Da Bilen kom til Danmark*. (When the Car came to Denmark). Louise Karlskov Skyggebjerg: Multiopfinder J.C.H. Ellehammer. (The Multiinventor J.H.C. Ellehammer. Viborg, 1995.

<sup>6</sup> Frank C. Motzkus: *100 år i bilistens tjeneste. Historien om FDM*. (100 years in service of the automobilist. Kbh., 2009; Steffen Elmer Jørgensen: *Fra chaussé til motorvej. Det overordnede danske vejnets udvikling fra 1761*. (From Chaussé to Motorway.: The Development of the Danish Main Road Network since 1761). Odense, 2001; Jørgen Burchardt, Mette Schønberg: *Lige ud ad landevejen. Med hestevogn og bil på amternes landeveje 1868-2006*. (Straight Ahead the Road. With Horsecarriage and automobile on the County Roads 1868-2006. Odense, 2006; Trafikministeriet: *Hundrede års trafik. Trafikministeriet 1900-2000*. (A hundred years of traffic. The Ministry of Traffic 1900-2000.) København, 2000; Tom Rallis: *Transport i Danmark 1830-1990*. (Transportation in Denmark 1830-1990). Kbh., 1992.

<sup>7</sup> A. Schmitto: International. *MOTOR* 1908 p. 438.

Two cases will be presented to demonstrate the development of the mediation and consumption junction. The first case is telling the story of touring as a narrative strategy to mobilise an ever growing number of automobile owners to use their vehicle for leisure purposes. The second case will demonstrate how FDM transformed leisure activity into consumption through the construction and promotion of auto-camping from the interwar years and especially during the cold war period.

By touring the countryside and going abroad you would get away from it all, leaving the drudgery of everyday life behind. Reaching unfamiliar destinations, going to strange and unknown places, and gazing at formidable views you may only have dreamed of before going on the road. If you had any knowledge beforehand of their existence it would be from reading the articles with tales of touring written by automobile travellers in the motor magazines or from guidebooks. Conquering the traditional barriers of time and space, and escaping the national legal restrictions laid on automobile driving by touring abroad gave you the ultimate experience of freedom from conventional life. Touring in an automobile gave mental access to the emotional feelings of independence and omnipotence as you could go almost anywhere as fast and as far away as you wanted, the speed enabled a clean cut with the routines of everyday life.<sup>8</sup>

Touring can be divided into two distinctive types of leisure activity, short term trips and long term trips. Small trips consists of one day tours of recreation and adventure where you leave home, reach your destination and return safely back home the same day. Typically, this kind of touring activity is Sunday driving, spontaneous touring where you may not even have a clear destination for the trip before you go 'out into blue' with the intention of getting a different experience without really knowing what to expect. In the early stages of touring before the automobile arrived this kind of small trip was boosted by the railways and shipping companies often in a combined package allowing a large segment of the population to tour collectively on Sundays. Only when you had arrived at the destination of the small tour, you were able to wander about for some time all on your own before returning back home. The individual mobility was

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<sup>8</sup> Mobility and speed are general features of modernity. Even though speed and mobility as time-space phenomena are attributed to various modern transportation technologies such as trains, ships, airplanes, cinema, and lately the virtual touring in cyberspace, I consider the automobile the central and primary icon of modern mobility. Cf. Tim Cresswell: *On the Move. Mobility in the Modern Western World*. New York, 2006; James J. Flink: *The Automobile Age*. Cambridge Mass., 1988; Wolfgang Schivelbusch: *The Railway Journey. The Industrialisation of Time and Space in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century*. Berkely, 1986 (1977); Stephen Kern: *The Culture of Time and Space, 1880-1918*. Cambridge Mass., 1983; Jean Baudriallard: *America*. London, 1989; Kristin Ross: *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies. Decolonisation and the Reordering of French Culture* Cambridge Mass., 1996; Jörg Beckmann: *Risky Mobility. The Filtering of Automobility's Unintended Consequences* Copenhagen, 2001; Bente Jensen, et al (eds): *Hastværk –moderne fart og tempo (In a hurry – modern speed and tempo)*. *Den jyske Historiker*, nr. 108, juni 2005.

enhanced tremendously by further mechanisation first by the bicycle and later on by motorcycles and the automobile. From the beginning the small touring by car could be in the company of other automobiles. The tours would often be organised by clubs, and the proper destinations for small touring were described in guidebooks and articles in the Motor magazines.<sup>9</sup>

Larger trips or grand touring are vacation trips for recreation, education, and adventure lasting more than one day. This type of touring implies a fundamental need for overnight accommodation and requires an infrastructure of restaurants, hotels, motels, and camping sites to service the tourists when they are not on the move. In the wake of grand touring comes a new service sector with the proper accommodations, the development of unusual sights and destinations along the tour. The tourist industry has invented, innovated, and diffused touring products with vehicles for transportation, fascinating sights and proper accommodations for leisure on a scale of mass consumption for the last 150 years. Today the tourist industry has become an important sector in the national economy.<sup>10</sup>

We find more or less the same pattern of appropriating the car by touring in Denmark as in other European countries from the early period on. Only the US is different in this respect. Here the car was basically appropriated by the need for practical transportation of persons, produce, and commodities over long distances. In the countryside as well as in the city automobiles rapidly replaced the horse and buggy. A leisure culture appropriating the car by touring evolved at the same time in the US for sure, but it was never a primary motive or a driving force for automobilism. Apart from the economic aspects of constructing touring destinations and sights for tourist

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<sup>9</sup> Jan Palmowski: Travels with Baedekker – The Guidebook and the Middle Classes in Victorian and Edwardian England. Rudy Koshar, ed.: *Histories of Leisure*. Oxford, 2002; Christopher S. Thompson: Bicycling, Class, and the Politics of Leisure in Belle Epoque France. Rudy Koshar, ed.: *Histories of Leisure*. Oxford, 2002; Patrick Young: *La Vielle France* as Object for Bourgeois Desire: The Touring Club de France and the French Regions, 1890 – 1918. Rudy Koshar, ed.: *Histories of Leisure*. Oxford, 2002; Stephen L. Harp: The Michelin Red Guides: Social Differentiation in Early Twentieth – Century French Tourism. Rudy Koshar, ed.: *Histories of Leisure*. Oxford, 2002; Catherine Bertho-Lavenir: Normes de comportement et contrôle de l'espace: Le Touring Club de Belgique avant 1914. *Le Mouvement social*, no. 178, France – Belgique Fin de Siecle. Jan. –Mar. 1997;

<sup>10</sup> James Buzzard: *The Beaten Track. European Tourism, Literature, and the Ways to 'Culture' 1800 – 1918*. Oxford, 1993; Dean MacCannell: *The Tourist. A New Theory of the Leisure Class*. New York, 1989; John Urry: *The Tourist Gaze. Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies*. London, 1990; Chris Rojek, John Urry, eds.: *Touring Cultures. Transformations of Travel and Theory*. London, 1997; Orvar Löfgren: *On Holiday. A History of Vacationing*. Berkely, 1999; Fred Inglis: *The Delicious History of the Holliday*. London, 2000; Warren James Belasco: *Americans on the Road: From Autocamp to Motel, 1910 -1945*. Cambridge Mass., 1979; Diane P. Koenker: Travel to Work, Travel to Play: On Russian Tourism, Travel and Leisure. *Slavic Review*, Vol. 62, No. 4. Tourism and Travel in Russia and the Soviet Union. Winter, 2003; Bente Jensen: Det danske Schweiz – Da Bornholm blev opdaget som turistmål. (Danish Switzerland – The Invention of Bornholm as a Tourist Destination) *Den jyske Historiker*, No. 65, Oktober 1993; Bente Jensen: Mellem gammelt og Nyt. Diskussionen af den tidlige turisme på Bornholm 1860-1902. (Between Old and New. The Discussion of Early Tourism on Bornholm 1860- 1902). *Bornholmske Samlinger*, III, 16, 2002.

consumption there is also an important educational aspect to be considered in the ideology of touring.<sup>11</sup>

The ideology of touring by car as a specific form of leisure consumption was originally formulated by the leaders of the motorist organisation FDM and introduced in a massive scale to its members already before WW 1. Touring included from the beginning different leisure and sport activities such as Sunday driving, races cross country or going abroad for a vacation touring in your own car. A prominent Danish automobile owner and typical representative in this respect was the coming vice president of FDM and Appointed Printer to the Royal Danish Court, Frederik Bagge, who in the summer of 1907 embarked on a grand tour of Europe with his wife in the backseat and in the company of four other automobiles.<sup>12</sup> Well underway and with a fine road ahead of them down in the beautiful Rhine valley some of the drivers suggested a car race but Mr. Bagge refused this proposition with the words: "Gentlemen, we do not make this tour to drive. We drive to make this tour". The incident was reported in an article in *MOTOR* with the conclusion that it was "a redemptive remark of cleverness" and a "flaming truth"; what it really meant was that the infant culture of automobile driving hereby refused to appropriate the automobile as a remedy for sport by stressing the tourist perspective of leisure, freedom and adventure instead. Motor sport events was reserved the Royal Automobile Club (KDAK) hereafter.<sup>13</sup>

The greatest obstacle to Danes going abroad and touring Germany and the rest of Europe by car at that time were the formal restrictions such as heavy tax barriers at the border. In May 1914 the Danish government signed an international convention that allowed unrestricted touring in foreign countries, this happened after heavy lobbying by FDM. One of the automobile drivers who seized the opportunity was Fr. Bagge who once again went touring through most of Europe driving more than 8.000 kilometre and crossing nine borders and nine mountains in his new Daimler. Afterwards he told the *MOTOR* magazine: "It was a wonderful trip from one end to the other, it can't be recommended strong enough to anyone who owns an automobile, that the best outcome you can get of the summer vacation is by touring an automobile; you will get to see the more interesting aspects of popular living and especially the small cities, that you will miss by

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<sup>11</sup> Rudy Koshar: *German Travel Cultures*. Oxford, 2000; Hans Magnus Enzensberger: *A Theory of Tourism*. In *New German Critique*, No. 68, Spring-Summer 1996.

<sup>12</sup> The tour from Copenhagen to Frankfurt as well as the Taunus races (Kaiserpreisrennen) in Frankfurt is described in detail in Alfred Nervø: *Ti Aar bag Rattet*. Fra Automobilernes og Motorcyklernes Barndomsaar. (Ten Years behind the wheel. From the childhood years of automobiles and motorcycles). København, 1917, pp. 90-162. Nervø continued with his ekvipage to Belgium after the races were over.

<sup>13</sup> H. Rothenborg: Den første internationale Automobil-Udflugt fra Danmark. *MOTOR*, 2. Aarg. Nr. 60, 15. juni 1907, p. 276-77.



travelling in a train”.<sup>14</sup> Unfortunately the outbreak of WW1 only a week later put an end to this new opportunity by closing the German border for good. As a direct consequence of the war Norway was discovered as a new and popular destination for holiday touring by automobile. The numerous articles on touring the countryside and going abroad appearing in every volume of *MOTOR* during this period were mostly written by the travellers in automobile. They all told the tales of the pioneer seeking adventure, the explorer detecting foreign and unknown places, the daredevil reaching distant sublime destinations by his own force, and the adventurer enduring all kinds of hardships driven by the sheer will to have success.

By the beginning of the second stage which is the formative and innovative period 1920-1940 in Danish automobile culture FDM had 15.000 members and the organisation recruited 5000 new members that same year. With this result FDM was quickly turning into a very important actor in the mediation junction of automobiles taking its seat in the tripartite traffic commissions where public matters of traffic were negotiated between the state, the industry and the organised consumers. At that point the Danish automobile culture had come of age and matured from being an exclusive aristocratic and elitist leisure culture into a much broader social movement of car owners based firmly on the upper middleclass.

The period was culturally constructive and created a broader automobile culture based on leisure activities. FDM evolved into an inclusive and democratic minded organisation of consumers, developing a string of membership services from legal and technical counselling, and selling automobile insurance to establishing a travel agency to promote and facilitate automobile grand touring home and abroad. The technological backbone of this dawning mass culture of automobiles was the Ford model T which more than 50% of the Danish car owners were in the possession of. In 1926 Ford Motor Company joined forces with FDM launching an active campaign for the promotion of auto-camping. In car salons and exhibitions and in numerous articles in *MOTOR* and in Ford Owners Magazine this new opportunity for leisure and consumption through out door living with the automobile was promoted. Taking the lead FDM opened the first of many camping sites in beautiful natural surroundings the very same year. By 1935 this automobile organization were running 30 highly standardized camping sites spread all over the country, and touring by automobile for camping sites became very popular especially among the younger generations as the numerous articles in every volume of *MOTOR* bear witness of.

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<sup>14</sup> En Automobilfart gennem Europa. Hofbogtrykker Bagge fortæller. *MOTOR*, 1914, p. 590-595.

By prescriptive and idealising means FDM and Ford Motor Company initiated a blossoming industry and managed to capture the imagination of the consumers, create an infrastructure for the automobile culture of leisure and give the idea of touring by car a new content of leisure activity. This would also appeal strongly to the lower middle classes, who would go touring for camping on motorcycle instead of by car. Touring your own countryside and visiting the sites of national historic and/or geographic importance instead of going abroad became solidly embedded in an ideology of nationalistic 'Bildung'. Touring the interior of the nation state would not only reserve the tourist consumption for the national economy and save a lot of foreign currency, it would teach the tourist a lesson of how great the nation was compared to any other nation. The examples of developing tourism in a nationalistic context are numerous. The national mobilisation of tourism seems to have been a strong and general trend in European and US history.<sup>15</sup>

The numerous articles in every volume of MOTOR with tales of touring by automobile changed focus from unique and adventurous destinations to being more prescriptive and repeating the same trivial destinations every season. The articles would describe sometimes in great detail how touring could be conducted by the easiest route and in the most comfortable manner. Many articles would also discuss moral issues and criticize matters of bad leisure behaviour such as drunken driving, hit and run driving, rotten driving and littering and prescribe the best moral conduct for the automobile tourists.

By 1939 there were 109.000 privately owned automobiles in Denmark, but the outbreak of WW2 meant a serious setback for automobile driving in general. All kinds of touring stopped momentarily in September 1939 and only the most necessary driving was allowed for the next six years. This was an interregnum period for the automobile culture and a halt to the opportunity of touring the countryside and abroad by car. By 1949 the total number of private automobiles had fallen to 105.000 but then things started to move in the other direction again.

The third stage is the period of imitation and diffusion of the automobile culture on a mass scale of consumption 1945-1970. This period had a very long take-off phase 1945-1952 with heavy restrictions on the importation of automobiles and the purchase of fuel for private use. From

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<sup>15</sup> Marguerite Shaffer: *See America First. Tourism and National Identity, 1880-1940*. Washington, 2001; Rudy Koshar: *Germans at the Wheel: Cars and Leisure Travel in Interwar Germany*. Rudy Koshar, ed.: *Histories of Leisure*. Oxford, 2002; "There's No Place Like Home": Soviet Tourism in Late Stalinism. *Slavic Review*, Vol. 62, No. 4. Tourism and Travel in Russia and the Soviet Union. Winter, 2003; Bente Jensen: Hammershus slotsruin mellem seværdighed og nationalt monument. (The Castle Ruin of Hammershus between Sight and National Monument). *Fortid og Nutid*, 1995, 1, April.

1952-1957 restrictions were gradually lifted and the popular mass culture of automobiles got well underway. By 1954 there were 184.000 private automobiles in the country and ten years later this number had risen to 731.000 private automobiles.

In a period of economic prosperity during the 1960ies most of the Danes including the working class were finally able to buy an automobile and go touring on Sundays and in the holiday season. Auto-camping home and abroad became immensely popular, and the grand summer tour with a trailer behind the car to distant destinations in the south of Europe became common. In 1973 the total number of private automobiles had reached a number of 1.232.000, the number of registered trailers for camping was more than 100.000. This rapid expansion in the number of automobiles resulted in a reshaping of the automobile culture of leisure into a mass movement of consumers appropriating the car by touring on Sundays and on vacation.

Again FDM took the lead by developing the consumption junction for automobiles into a genuine mass culture. In a survey of leisure time activities in Denmark made in 1964 by The Danish National Institute of Social Research on the initiative of DR the national radio and TV Company almost 13% had spent their vacation on a motorised tour in Denmark or touring abroad, while 60% had used a car in connection with the holidays. In a Gallup survey made in 1973 on the initiative of FDM the same figures for touring by car in Denmark or abroad during the vacation had risen up to 60% of the total holiday traffic. Although there may be some bias comparing results from the two surveys the overall trend upwards seems unmistakeably clear.<sup>16</sup>

From the end of 1950ies many Danes became extremely hooked on touring by car during the holidays. Explanations of this upward trend must be found in the growing economic prosperity during the period and the extension of the vacation period from three to four weeks. Of overall importance was the massive promotion campaign for touring by automobile launched by FDM Travel Agency during the same period and heavily supported by hundreds of articles in MOTOR magazine pushing the same message. The main body of touring articles in MOTOR magazine became still more trivial with topics constantly repeating the message of familiar and new found opportunities for consumption, and representing the same touring destinations again and again in each and every volume. At the same time new destinations for auto-camping behind the iron curtain were being developed. In the mid sixties the tourist organisation in Czechoslovakia launched a great campaign inviting the Danes on automobile holiday, and very soon Yugoslavia

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<sup>16</sup> P-H Kühl, Inger Koch-Nielsen, Kaj Westergaard: *Fritidsvaner i Danmark med særligt hensyn til radio og fjernsyn*. København, 1966, p. 230; Niels Gustav Bardenfleth: Hverdagens og fritidens transportmiddel (The means of transportation for everyday life and for leisure) *MOTOR*, no. 20. 29. september 1973, p. 28-29.

followed with a lot of destinations located by the Adriatic Sea. In the early 1970'ies Bulgaria and DDR would also begin to campaign in *MOTOR* to attract Danes to their leisure resorts. The tale of touring by automobile was transformed into stories of touring as a means for mass consumption during leisure time. The articles that would present new gadgets and other paraphernalia for touring came in an endless stream. The promotion campaign for touring as consumption culminated in the beginning of 1973 with a large exhibition in Copenhagen named Car and Leisure (Bil og Fritid), and with a bombardment of articles in the magazine on the issue of consumption for leisure by touring and auto camping with the automobile. *MOTOR* magazine went as far as to bring an article by a very popular host in the TV News on how to manage the children on the tour and avoid any massacre in the backseat. To go along with this The *MOTOR* Publishing Company even produced two 'giant-books' for the entertainment of the backseat drivers. It seems as if this campaign was very successful indeed.<sup>17</sup>

As a consumer organisation FDM peaked by the end of 1973 with over 250.000 members that could benefit from a wide and sophisticated range of services related to the consumption of the automobile for leisure. During the recession after the oil crisis by the end of 1973 a lot of members left the organisation, and FDM has never regained its former strength as an organisation of consumers. An explanation of this downward trend can be found at the infrastructural level. During the 1970ies the suburban housing areas mushroomed and more people began to commute to work by car. At the same time the process of decentring the industry and commercial activities relocating production and consumption outside the cities turned the automobile into a practical necessity in Danish society. The mass culture of the automobile had come to a decisive turning point where the use of the family car for practical mobility in everyday life had gained more importance than the use of the automobile for leisure purposes. Today, after a 100 years of service business as a consumer organisation for the automobile owner it is evident that FDM from the mid seventies went through many troubles trying to adjust to this new role as an interest organisation for a new type of members with an rapidly increasing dependency on the automobile to be able to function properly in everyday life.

The turning point for this popular mass culture of leisure appeared when the dependency of the automobile for practical every day purpose overruled the leisure regime of the automobile. This happened during the 1970ies. The Danish automobile culture was finally Americanized and this brought the nation wholeheartedly into the age of the automobile. Today the

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<sup>17</sup> Steen Bostrup: Børn med på ferie (Taking the children with you on vacation). *MOTOR* 10-11 May 26 1973, p. 94-97. This was an exclusive double issue entirely focusing on touring by car in the holidays.

average Danish family would find it extremely hard to live a normal life with the daily routines without one or several automobiles. As a consequence of this the appropriation of the automobile in Denmark is now primarily for practical purposes. But the Danes will still use the automobile extensively for small and grand touring as well as for other leisure activities.

## **Just a small car - Mass motorization in post war Italy**

Until the beginning of Second World War European leisure and tourism as an issue was restricted to certain social groups, who had the substantial financial means to live a life of leisure: to relax, to take a rest, to recreate them selves, to undertake long journeys or retreat to their villas in the countryside.<sup>18</sup>

However, for many countries, in the early Twentieth Century, we could already talk of popular tourism: in Great Britain, Switzerland, Germany and in the United States pleasure travel reached at that time also working classes and "social tourism" was a concept widely established<sup>19</sup>. Italy, in this respect, was really overdue, because the incomes were still very low and free time provided by law almost didn't exist, despite the work done by raising various touristic associations.<sup>20</sup> Industrial development and massive migration flows, conflict and first social achievements, the shaping of an urban middle class, heir and counterpart for both economic power and aristocracy, were the background in which the *Italian Touring Cycling Club* (then just *Touring Club*), one of the earliest and most enduring Italian tourist associations, was born in 1894.<sup>21</sup> The *Touring Club* promoted the touristic use of the bicycle, "a necessary, useful, economical means of transportation for the working class, a means that is going to become the future popular coach, inclined for this to shorten the social distance between lower classes and richer ones". The *Touring* assertions were certainly too optimistic, considering that two thirds of the income of a worker were used for mere sustenance. However, the appearance of the bicycle seemed "the most tangible sign of a new season of private consumption", even if the *Touring Club* will always have an elite

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<sup>18</sup> Claudia Ciaccio, *Temi emergenti di geografia del turismo e del tempo libero*, in Giacomo Corna Pellegrini (a cura di), *Aspetti e problemi della geografia*, Vol. 1, Marzorati, Settimo Milanese, 1987, p. 603.

<sup>19</sup> See Hans Magnus Enzensberger, *A Theory of Tourism*, in *New German Critique*, no. 68, Spring-Summer 1996, pp. 129-131 and Cesare Saibene, Giacomo Corna Pellegrini, *La regione turistica*, in Giacomo Corna Pellegrini (edited by), *Studi e ricerche sulla regione turistica. I Lidi ferraresi*, Vita e Pensiero, Milano, 1968, pp. 6-7.

<sup>20</sup> Giacomo Corna Pellegrini, Maria Amalia Colao, *La storia del turismo*, in *Touring Club Italiano. 90 anni di turismo in Italia. 1894-1984*, Touring Club Italiano, Milano, 1984, p. 31.

<sup>21</sup> Giuseppe Bozzini, *Turismo insieme: l'associazionismo e il Touring Club Italiano*, in *Touring Club Italiano. 90 anni di turismo in Italia. 1894-1984*, Touring Club Italiano, Milano, 1984, p. 34

attitude.<sup>22</sup> Among consumptions, also travelling, for pleasure or for information, for the sake of motion or stimulated by the discovery of nature, started to have a significant place<sup>23</sup>, but, since its birth, tourism in Italy would always be linked to the ideas of *private consumption* and *individuality*.

A first (and maybe the only) attempt to make holidays and free time a mass attitude came just during the Fascist period, with the establishment of the Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro (National Agency on After-Work), a paragovernment foundation, representing the regime's implicit policy of arrogating a wide range of social welfare initiatives to the authority.

According to Victoria de Grazia<sup>24</sup>, for large-scale industrial enterprise in Europe and America, there was nothing especially novel, much less “fascist”, about setting up facilities to regulate the leisure of workers. The services recommended by Mussolini's regime to assist, educate and uplift the “masses” differed little from the Anglo-Saxon and American Sunday schools, night classes, “truck” stores, and company housing that, since the mid-Nineteenth Century, had been founded by paternalistic employers. The notion that businessmen should invest in community institutions as well was also entirely familiar to the post-1900 generation of industrial philanthropists: the formation of a modern industrial workforce demanded industry-wide cooperation and systematic intervention outside of the firm. Initial conception of the *dopolavoro* organization was indeed no more than a transposition of these increasingly common business practices into the Italian environment.<sup>25</sup>

The “new” lower middle class has commonly been identified with the emergence of mass culture, as its leading consumer if not its actual creator. Through the Thirties, at least, salaried workers, generally, had more spare time and disposable income than the vast majority of production workers. In Italy, however, in the years between the wars, the clerical labour force was still so small in numbers, so deeply divided by the different terms of employment in private and public sectors, and so poorly paid that it could hardly keep up appearances, much less set standards of cultural consumption for an emerging mass public.<sup>26</sup> Whereas in liberal-democratic societies the new forms of leisure were experienced as largely individual acquisitions, in fascist Italy they were conferred collectively and closely tied to state beneficence.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Stefano Pivato, *Il Touring club Italiano*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 2006, p. 151.

<sup>23</sup> Giuseppe Bozzini, *Turismo insieme: l'associazionismo e il Touring Club Italiano*, in *Touring Club Italiano. 90 anni di turismo in Italia. 1894-1984*, Touring Club Italiano, Milano, 1984, p. 34

<sup>24</sup> Victoria de Grazia, *The Culture of Consent. Mass Organization of Leisure in Fascist Italy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1981.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 60-64.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 127-128.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 186.

Of course, with the outbreak of Second World War, every Italian touristic ambition aborted. The problem that affected tourism recovery in the post war years the most was the general impoverishment<sup>28</sup>. The low standard of living of the population, exhausted by the many years of war, had considerably reduced the luxury goods and tourism was certainly a luxury.<sup>29</sup> It was a luxury to own any sort of vehicle: it was hard still thinking about bicycles as simple “leisure means of transportation”.

Having experienced, during the war, displacement, “non conventional” transports, trains out of order, crowded tramways carriages, long interruption of public services, Italians strongly desired to take back their own lives, their jobs, and also some leisure. People needed to move quickly and independently, with little effort, and at a reasonable cost. The motor scooter was nearly “naturally” designed to meet these requirements and to lead Italians to a gradual rising of living standards. If for Americans this improvement had been represented by the car, the motor scooter occupied, in Italy, a place that was vacant. The people of this “transition era”, who didn’t know anything about tourism and for short trips they would take the train or the bus, were the real target for scooters producers: between 1946 and 1951, there were in Italy twenty different scooters’ trades at minimum.<sup>30</sup> The scooter was really the very first impulse to mass motorization in Italy: it had all those characteristics of agility, economy and simplicity that sets the tourism character par excellence. Scooters’ owners passed quickly from Sunday trips, to the weekend ones, to get to a full week travelling, up to thousands of kilometres journeys. To demonstrate that the scooter was a solid means of transportation, able to face any difficulty, both Piaggio and Innocenti (the two main Italian scooter producers) well publicized enterprises performed by enthusiastic scooter drivers, such as the crossing of the Congo in 1951 riding a *Vespa*<sup>31</sup>, or the story of a girl who travelled 11,000 kilometres with her *Lambretta*, from Italy to New Delhi.<sup>32</sup>

On the contrary to what had happened (and was happening) in other parts of the world, as Enzensberger noted already in 1958<sup>33</sup>, mass tourism has been developed in Italy not on the basis of organized tours, but rather on individual motivations. Each one wanted to be free to

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<sup>28</sup> In accord with the “Inchiesta parlamentare sulla miseria e i mezzi per combatterla” [Parliament Survey about Poverty and Systems to Fight It], commissioned by Chamber of Deputies at the end of 1951, 38,8% of Italian families couldn’t buy meat (27,5% bought it just once a week); 15,1% didn’t consume sugar (only 18,7% consumed more than 40 gr. per day). See Paolo Braghin (edited by), *Inchiesta sulla miseria in Italia. 1951-1952*, Einaudi, Torino, 1978, pp. 15-18.

<sup>29</sup> Stefano Pivato, *Il Touring club Italiano*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 2006, p. 140.

<sup>30</sup> “Gli Scooters”, in *Motociclismo*, 4th-11th December 1947 e Arnaldo Cappellini, *Il Motor Scooter*, Sperling & Kupfer, Milano, 1951, pp. 35-38.

<sup>31</sup> E.Z., “Viaggio attraverso il Congo”, *Piaggio*, May-August, 1951.

<sup>32</sup> “Vado sino a Nuova Delhi ...ma torno subito”, *Notiziario Lambretta*, November-December, 1953.

<sup>33</sup> Hans Magnus Enzensberger, *A Theory of Tourism*, in *New German Critique*, no. 68, Spring-Summer 1996, p. 131. First version of this essay was published in August 1958 on German review *Merkur* (pp. 701-720).

choose the time and the way to organize trips and holidays on their own. It is therefore easy to understand why tourism and leisure in Italy are so closely tied to private means of transportation and, from the mid-Fifties, especially to the cars.

The car, for all Thirties and Forties, had been just a upper class good, protagonist of Nuvolari, Campari, Ascari and Varzi's sportive exploits. Just at the end of the war we can see a new, modest, motorization: in 1946, 149.649 cars were circulating; in 1950 they were 342.021, most of these small cars; 131.097 were, in fact, *Fiat 500 Topolino*, a small unassuming car, both about technology and performances.<sup>34</sup> Anyway, times were ready for Italians to pass, gradually into the ownership of a car.

In 1950, the FIAT production line began to operate in conformity with all the elements characterizing the mass production and overcame the edge of 100,000 cars produced in one year.<sup>35</sup> This company, as many others, was taking advantage of financial and technical aids coming from across the Atlantic: Italy had to follow the Anglo-Saxon spirit which tended to standardize any job.<sup>36</sup> As Omar Calabrese has clearly underlined, to produce a mass good as this car was going to become, represents a more general economical and political decision to transform Italy into an industrial country.<sup>37</sup>

In 1952 the Italian Government decided to expand the road infrastructure, not rebuilding the ordinary road network, but preferring to start a new highway system, considered as an instrument providing the most appropriate response to the growing demand for mobility.<sup>38</sup> All around the "motorway dream", as it is easy to guess, were intertwined public and private interests: the State was concerned to ensure the realization of an infrastructure network capable of starting country modernization and increasing fuel consumption, which assured remunerative income taxes; single companies were really interested in building infrastructure and selling cars.<sup>39</sup> The road deal and cars spreading progressively created a real euphoria in the Country: the car was considered a symbol of freedom and prosperity, as well as a technological progress, a true marvel, that would enable the individual to travel independently and comfortably.

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<sup>34</sup> *Statistiche automobilistiche. Autoveicoli circolanti*, Aci, Roma, 1950-1975.

<sup>35</sup> Ferdinando Fasce, "Voglia di automobile. Fiat e pubblicità negli anni del dopoguerra", *Contemporanea*, n. 2, April 2001, pp. 209-210.

<sup>36</sup> Duccio Bigazzi, *Mass Production or Organized Craftsmanship? The Post-War Italian Automobile Industry*, in Jonathan Zeitlin, Gary Herrigel (edited by), *Americanization and Its Limits. Reworking US Technology and Management in Postwar Europe and Japan*, Oxford, Oxford University press, 2000, pp. 282-283.

<sup>37</sup> Omar Calabrese, *L'utilitaria*, in Mario Isnenghi (edited by), *I luoghi della memoria. Simboli e miti dell'Italia Unita*, Laterza, Roma, 1998, pp.544-545.

<sup>38</sup> Federico Paolini, *Un paese a quattro ruote. Automobili e società italiana*, Marsilio, Venezia, 2005, p. 20.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 26.



The same year FIAT began to seriously consider producing a “super cheap”<sup>40</sup> car, which would provide an answer to the “will to motorization”. The idea, the philosophy, to produce a small cubic capacity car had clearly American origins; it started from the same presupposition which had inspired Henry Ford to create, at the beginning of Twentieth Century, a popular car also low middle class could buy. This “new consumer” had to be the worker himself: who had made a car had to be able to buy it as well.

Finally in March 1955 during the Geneva Car Show FIAT introduced a new small cubic capacity car to replace the old *Topolino: Fiat 600*.<sup>41</sup> It had two doors and a 633 cc. (21 hp) back engine; it was rather comfortable for four people and it cost 590.000 liras.<sup>42</sup> The price corresponded to a manager’s salary and not to the worker’s monthly wages.<sup>43</sup> *Fiat 600* became quite soon the middle-class car, the family car showing a certain social distinction. *Fiat 600* had an immediate and long success (it would have been produced till 1969), but *Fiat Nuova 500* was the car that really permitted the Italian population to realise the dream to own a car, even if very tiny. In FIAT intentions, *500* would have to be a scooter alternative solution, better than a direct challenger of *600*, just an opportunity to pass from two to four wheels, for new driver category: working class, ladies and young people.

Working class, who lived and worked in the industrial cities, thanks small cubic capacity cars, especially *500*, discovered also the pleasure trip, during week ends or free time, together with the family. The lakes were the favourite destination for who lived in Milan, but also Switzerland was easy to reach.<sup>44</sup> For those who lived in Rome it could be a good idea to go to the archaeological sites of Sabina<sup>45</sup>, or during spring and summer to go to the seaside, to Ostia, the favourite beach of the Romans. Seaside was easy to reach by car also for who lived in Bologna: in less than an hour they could be in Rimini or in other nice place in Romagna. Thanks to the new opportunity to move faster given by car, it was also possible to leave for a winter holiday week, as suggested by *Fiat 500* advertisement.<sup>46</sup> Who didn’t live too far from mountains could also go to ski just for a day.

Girls born between the end of the war and the early Fifties were the first generation of Italian women to have, in mass, their driving licences. In 1963 nearly one million women drove,

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<sup>40</sup> Pietro Bairati, *Valletta*, UTET, Torino, 1983, pp. 255-256.

<sup>41</sup> Gianni Baldi, “Gli Italiani vogliono l’utilitaria fuoriserie”, *Epoca*, 13 marzo 1955.

<sup>42</sup> See Giancenzio Madaro, *Fiat 600*, Nada Editore, Vimodrone, 1991.

<sup>43</sup> Ferdinando Fasce, “Voglia di automobile”, cit., p. 217.

<sup>44</sup> “Settembre in Svizzera”, *Quattroruote*, September 1956.

<sup>45</sup> Luisa Rora, “A Cantalupo in Sabina, per un museo ignorato”, *Quattroruote*, 1958.

<sup>46</sup> Advertising Fiat 500 Campaign, Winter 1957-1958.

and for half of them it was a recent conquest<sup>47</sup>; so they were young people as well. Just between Fifties and Sixties, for the very first time, young people started to be considered as specific social group, with their own identity and way of socialisation<sup>48</sup>. If at the beginning of mass motorization, scooters had helped them to have an individual mobility, having a car meant also the opportunity to move far from parent's control, far from their town or neighbourhood, from "authority".<sup>49</sup> Often it means also to have a little of intimacy, using car also in a "sentimental" way.<sup>50</sup> The car was useful not just for leisure but also for pleasure.

Thanks to the increasing diffusion of cars in the Fifties and Sixties, holidays became habitual to the ordinary Italian families and the traditional forms of élite tourism changed to forms of mass consumption.<sup>51</sup> Italians considered the holidays to be the most glaring form of consumption.<sup>52</sup> It was a discovery facilitated by the increasing incomes, resulting from economic growth, supported by the feverish construction road political and encouraged by a more "urban" way of life.<sup>53</sup> In this same period a lot of workers started to have paid holidays, having in such a way the opportunity to become clients for seaside or mountain places. At the end of Sixties, Italians going to holiday were three times than in Thirties.<sup>54</sup>

The desire for vacations ended up to radically transform the landscape and the "hospitality industry" building (sometimes wild...) hotels and guesthouses that were satisfactory to the needs of a "democratic" holiday deeply affected the economy and the town planning of holiday places.<sup>55</sup> If the *Touring Club* had tried to "make Italians" by proposing them itineraries that will lead to the discovery of their Country, also thanks its famous guides<sup>56</sup>, during the economical boom, Italians learned more and more to do for themselves in a quite uncontrolled way. The holiday ended up to be just a part of a hedonistic mass culture.<sup>57</sup> The booming tourist industry had no educational ambitions or ethical purposes: the image of an Italian holiday for the most part is made up by shouting voices, automobile horns honking and long queues on the highways.

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<sup>47</sup> G.M., "Una donna, quando guida, è giovane e bella", *Quattroruote*, October 1963

<sup>48</sup> See Simonetta Piccone Stella, *La prima generazione. Ragazze e ragazzi nel miracolo economico italiano*, FrancoAngeli, Milano, 1993.

<sup>49</sup> Emanuela Scarpellini, *L'Italia dei consumi. Dalla belle époque al nuovo millennio*, Laterza, Roma-Bari, 2008, p. 144.

<sup>50</sup> Arturo Orvieto, "Per l'utilizzazione sentimentale dell'automobile ci vogliono le tendine", *Quattroruote*, May 1960.

<sup>51</sup> Patrizia Battilani, *Vacanze di pochi, vacanze di tutti. L'evoluzione del turismo europeo*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 2001, p. 238.

<sup>52</sup> Ibidem, pp. 140-141.

<sup>53</sup> Ibidem, pp. 238-239.

<sup>54</sup> Ibidem, p. 238.

<sup>55</sup> Stefano Pivato, *Il Touring club Italiano*, cit., p. 143.

<sup>56</sup> Ibidem, pp. 32-34.

<sup>57</sup> Silvio Lanaro, *Storia dell'Italia repubblicana*, Marsilio, Venezia, 1992, p. 269-274.

## **Zhiguli a car for escape - USSR between private and collective**

The history of Soviet consumption is not a traditional field of studies. In spite of this, it's firstly a crucial part of the Soviet culture and history because the sphere of consumption is a useful parameter in order to deepen the idea of well-being, which was a Soviet ideological target. Secondly, the history of Soviet consumption is an excellent resource for history of consumption in general, since during the Soviet experiment heritages from the past and utopian impulses stratified in the society giving considerable complexity to the issue of consumption both from an ideological and a practical point of view.

The topic this chapter analyses is closely linked with this frame since it concerns the Soviet car – specifically the Zhiguli – and the cultural context in which it appeared. The goal is to deepen the meaning of this car in the Soviet history, developing considerations on crucial themes such as transportation and leisure. Some scholars have studied the history of the Soviet car and of the Zhiguli. Two articles are important, the first by Nordica Nettleton (2006) and the second by Lewis H. Siegelbaum (2009).<sup>58</sup> Moreover, of course, the recent monograph by Siegelbaum *Cars for Comrades: The Life of the Soviet Automobile* (2008) helps to have a wide documented overview on the history of the Soviet car.<sup>59</sup> Partially wandering, the approach of this chapter takes into consideration aspects less analysed by others. It wants to outline the consumption culture in which the Zhiguli found place and the degree of novelty it represented in the Soviet Union by a cultural point of view. By this line, important source is the Soviet literature and press, just for enter the Zhiguli in the parameters in which it was.<sup>60</sup>

In the endless struggle which there always was in USSR between collective and individual models, everything found place: from politics to happiness, and of course consumption. The Soviet car, as a consumer good, is a useful element for understanding the USSR and its dichotomies, as well as its originality – or not – in creating models alternative to the Western ones. The Zhiguli, private means of transportation and the first mass car in USSR, is a little but interesting piece of the frame.

Beyond the official ideology, among Soviet citizens (and socio-occupational groups) –

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<sup>58</sup> Nordica Nettleton, "Driving towards communist consumerism", *Cahiers du monde russe*, no. 1-2 (2006): 131-152; Lewis H. Siegelbaum "Car Culture in the USSR, 1960-1980s", *Technology and Culture*, no. 1 (2009): 1-22.

<sup>59</sup> Lewis H. Siegelbaum, *Cars for Comrades: The Life of the Soviet Automobile* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 2008).

<sup>60</sup> Particularly interesting is the Soviet monthly magazine *L'Unione Sovietica* (The Soviet Union), a kind of digest of the Soviet popular press, a periodical destined to foreign countries and so translated in many languages: I have used the Italian version. Of course the propaganda accent is often noticeable, and it's useful for understanding points the State-Party wanted to stress, and the suggestions Soviet people get from their institutions.

as it's normal – different approaches towards consumption issue were spread, covering the wide *continuum* from individual to collective. Nevertheless, the Soviet State-Party tried to trace out models to follow. As regards consumption models, the Soviet State-Party preferred collective solutions instead of individual, and used to underline the importance of “rational” attitudes towards consumption instead of “irrational” ones. “Rational” consumption practically was a restrained consumption or, better, a consumption in line with the Soviet economic reality, without excessive claims, opposed – as the Party stated – to the Capitalistic countries' typical attitude: excessive consumption or consumerism.

The collective parameter was ideologically fundamental for consumption, and also for other questions closely linked with the theme of the car such as transportation and leisure. Considering an important part of leisure – tourism – and its history, scholars have stressed tendency to standardization and "military analogies", depicting tourism as "a parody of total mobilization", so that the concepts of control emerges.<sup>61</sup> These characteristics of the history of tourism remind of many points of the Soviet collective ideology, even if differences are deep because of the permeating strength and will the Soviet regime used in controlling as many aspects of society as possible. Then we have to remember that tourism and leisure in general were intended by the Soviet State-Party in terms of service and not of commerce and consumption. Moreover, leisure in USSR was something controlled by institutions closely tied with the power, such as – above all – the Party, the Komsomol (the Communist youth union) and the trade unions. Even if on the press the idea of a free (and luxury) leisure and tourism by different means of transportation was often suggested.<sup>62</sup> Nevertheless – it's useful to remember – as regards tourism, in the Soviet Union it was intended as inside the USSR itself, because of the high difficulty of going abroad for normal citizens.

Then, the question of "total leisure" is set in part on the same bases of public transportation as an ideological model: a collective model of service with limitations in the freedom

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<sup>61</sup> Hans Magnus Enzensberger, “A Theory of Tourism”, *New German Critique*, no. 68 (1996): 117-135, p. 131.

<sup>62</sup> As regards airplane see: *Ogonek*, no. 4 (1953): last cover. This is an advertisement of Aeroflot (the Soviet Airlines). The picture shows a mountain landscape with an airplane and the caption names "health resorts of Caucasus and Crimea" (*kurorty Kryma i Kavkaza*). Concerning the link between car and tourism: A. Novikov, "Osen' na kavkazskom poberezh'e" [Autumn on Caucasus coast], *Ogonek*, no. 48 (1954): 20, 21. As regards train: *Ogonek*, no. 32 (1958): last cover. It's an advertisement of the Ministry of railroads (Ministerstvo putei soobshcheniia SSSR) about reductions in prices of train tickets for first-class carriages and sleeping cars of direct connections (international). It is stated that in the wagons there are any comfort for the rest of passengers.

of moving.<sup>63</sup> Public means of transportation is tied with the idea of control because it has – in itself – planned ways and schedules, as well as documentation of travel (booking, tickets, exhibitions of identity documents, and so on). In USSR the car was set in such a context. The issue of transportation was involved in a deep ideological question. Such as other issues, transportation could be intended in two different ways: a collective one and a personal, private one. The Soviet State-Party focused on the difference between public and private transportation, preferring the first solution.

The public solution of transportation had two different explanations. The first was political and considered public transportation as a right of people such as health and education (service and not consumption), in a perspective in which people could enjoy basic services, moreover free or low cost, without social discriminations. The second explanation regarded the police control and the necessity for its headquarters to know of people's movements through bureaucratic registrations on the territory, personal tickets, the determined routes to destinations and so on. Not to mention that leisure travels were very often organized by trade unions and the citizen/worker needed a travel voucher (*putevka*) from his workplace's institution: a fact that underlines the concept of pre-arranged and control.

In spite of the ideological lines traced by the State-Party, it's possible to state that from Stalin on both the ideas of individual and “irrational” consumption found their legitimacy – at least virtually – in USSR. Suffice it to remember the particular – let's say luxury – consumer goods in advertisements of the Stalin's period. These kinds of examples continued later on to characterize the official communication on consumption all up to the end of the Soviet Union. But beyond images shown in periodicals or posters, the Soviet government generally didn't concentrate its investments in producing consumer goods.<sup>64</sup>

Concerning cars, because of the Socialist importance of public transportation, USSR didn't planned mass production of cars, so that the car was considered a luxury good, because of the price and the limited number. Till the coming of the Zhiguli in 1970, passenger car production destined to non-institutional use was deeply different from the Western one and of the other Socialist countries as well. Before the advent of Zhiguli the car emerged in Soviet culture as a

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<sup>63</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 124: "The victory of the bourgeois revolution implanted in each individual a sensation of freedom that had to clash with the very society that produced it."

<sup>64</sup> See Viktoriia V. Uchenova, *Istoriia otechestvennoi reklamy 1917-1990* [History of domestic advertising 1917-1990] (Iuniti: Moskva, 2004); Aleksandr Snopkov, Pavel Snopkov, Aleksandr Skliaruk (eds.), *Reklama v plakate: russkiii torгово-promyshlennyi plakat za 100 let* [Advertising in the poster: Russian commercial-industrial poster in 100 years] (Kontakt-Kul'tura: Moskva, 2007).

luxury good, a dream which had appearance of a prize or the result of great care in the field of work.

Nevertheless, the USSR legitimized cars production and during the Brezhnev's leadership, in the second half of the 60s, the Soviet State-Party decided to start a cars' mass production or – let's say – the production of a utility car for the mass. Concerning this, in 1969 the Soviet press wrote: “[...] the modern man considers personal car a necessity such as house, clothes, radio, and television.” But it also added the necessity of measures such as “the rationalization of the car’s structure and a reasonable relation between individual cars and public transport”: once again the concept of “rational consumption” and the importance of the public aspect of transportation converged.<sup>65</sup>

A central step in the Soviet car production was the factory of Tol’iatti city. Togliatti (Tol’iatti is the Cyrillic transliteration from Italian) was the surname of the Italian Communist Party’s secretary – Palmiro Togliatti – given to the Soviet city Stavropol’-na-Volge in 1964, when the Italian politician died. In this city of Samara region, on the river Volga, during the VIII economic plan (1966-1970) the Soviet leadership, with Leonid Brezhnev as the Party’s leader, decided to build a cars’ big factory. In order to do it, the USSR of Brezhnev – and we have to remember that Brezhnev had a passion for cars and collected them – made a deal in 1966 with the Italian car factory FIAT.<sup>66</sup> Some scholars, such as Lewis H. Siegelbaum, have stressed the decision of making a car for masses as a point of the so-called Brezhnev social contract, which was a kind of exchange between State-Party and population of consensus and a relative material well-being.<sup>67</sup> This type social contract would grant the population a broader access to the sphere of personal consumer goods. Apart from this, Soviet population had received a big impulse towards consumption aspirations (above all consumption linked to technology) during the whole precedent Khrushchev's leadership and especially thanks to the 1961 Party’s new programme which announced the next coming of Communism. Now, the State-Party propaganda on consumption had to give people something real. There was a delay in private motorization the USSR had to redress, and the Brezhnev's leadership managed to find the way to do it.

Thus, in the Soviet city with an Italian name, the Italian factory FIAT contributed to build, since 1966, the Soviet factory "VAZ" (*Volzhskii Avtomobil’nyi Zavod* or Cars’ Factory of

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<sup>65</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>66</sup> Lewis H. Siegelbaum, *Cars for Comrades: The Life of the Soviet Automobile*, cit., pp. 88-92.

<sup>67</sup> Lewis H. Siegelbaum, “Car Culture in the USSR, 1960-1980s”, cit., p. 11. On the development of the city Tol’iatti see Lewis H. Siegelbaum, *Cars for Comrades: The Life of the Soviet Automobile*, cit., pp. 80-84.

Volga), then known abroad with the name "Lada". Another piece of Italy in this Soviet story was the car's model itself. The agreement with FIAT provided the construction of the factory, with assembly lines, and also the production of the model FIAT-124, a simple and popular model, which in 1967 received the prize "Car of the year", and also a great success abroad.<sup>68</sup> This Italian model has been produced in Italy since 1966, till 1974: the basic model was a sedan four doors with a boxy line. Quite new was the engine, 1200 cc., 60 horsepower, four speed. Since 1970 the cars' new factory of Tol'jatti gave the market the Soviet version of FIAT-124.<sup>69</sup> The model was named "2101" or "Zhiguli" (or also "Kopeika", one rouble cent), from the name of the hills near the city of Tol'jatti. The new factory was enormous: 510 hectares' area, two kilometres long and 500 meters wide assembly building.<sup>70</sup>

The Zhiguli had some differences if compared to the original FIAT-124. Indeed, NAMI<sup>71</sup>, the Soviet State Central Scientific Research Automobile and Engine Institute, made tests with the result of some modifications in order to make the new car fit for the Russian conditions.<sup>72</sup> There were some differences in the engine and stronger wheel suspensions: Soviet roads conditions were very different from the Italian ones. The Zhiguli had to face not only ice, snow, mud, but also the action of climatic factors on the road surface, and, as Lewis H. Siegelbaum noticed, *rasputitsa*, the impracticability of the roads.<sup>73</sup>

The Zhiguli – such as the FIAT model – was built with very easy mechanics, so that the owner himself could solve some car's simple problems after having gained a little experience with it. A very popular car by many points of view and its success over the years showed that it was very well fit for the Soviet Union conditions. The theme of simple mechanics has to be linked with the meaning itself of "utility car" as a car devised in order to give the owner autonomy, from the mechanic, from having a garage, from customer service and so on: an autonomy today no more associated to utility car, since utility car has completely changed losing much of its original sense of simple and cheap means of transportation. In order to give a cheap and long-lasting vehicle and

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<sup>68</sup>As regards FIAT-124 see, for instance, [http://www.mitoalfaromeo.com/gruppofiat/fiat\\_124.asp](http://www.mitoalfaromeo.com/gruppofiat/fiat_124.asp) (accessed 01.03.2010).

<sup>69</sup> William H. Parker, "The Soviet Motor Industry", *Soviet Studies*, no. 4 (1980): 515-541, p. 522: "[...] the first cars appeared in April 1970; the full production of 660,000 cars was reached in 1974."

<sup>70</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>71</sup> *Central'nyi nauchno-issledovatel'skii avtomobi'lnyi i avtomotornyj institut*.

<sup>72</sup> See William H. Parker, "The Soviet Motor Industry" cit., p. 522. Cf. Lewis H. Siegelbaum, *Cars for Comrades: The Life of the Soviet Automobile*, cit., p. 91.

<sup>73</sup> Lewis H. Siegelbaum, *Cars for Comrades: The Life of the Soviet Automobile*, cit., p. 128. Cf. also p. 131.

to make the car's owner free from unknown technology and expensive repairs, "utility car" was the first step in European mass motorization, and the Zhiguli was its symbol in the Soviet Union.

The Zhiguli started to appear on the market and as the propaganda showed every possible problem was already solved. For instance, in March 1971 the Soviet Press, concerning the differences between the original FIAT model and its Soviet son, underlined a solution for a big question: the Russian winter. So, thanks to a special lubricant – as it was written – the Cars' Factory of Volga guaranteed that the Zhiguli's engine could start without any problem in every condition: even with a temperature of 25 degrees below zero<sup>74</sup>.

The Zhiguli is the first and last Soviet "mass" cars, and part itself of the Soviet history because of its longevity and spreading which also meant that it motorized different generations of Soviets/Russians.<sup>75</sup> Proof of its glorious history is that, still today, it's possible to see on the Russian roads and in the whole former USSR many models of this car, even of the first one, the "2101". Nevertheless, even if today it's full of foreign cars on the former Soviet roads, the Zhiguli has not finished its history because its last models ("2105" and "2107") are still on sale as the cheapest cars on the Russian market. It's possible to choose between 18 different colours of the two models in the new ecological version Euro-3.

## Conclusion

The development of a European automobile culture was from the outset primarily based on leisure activities, and the prime mover for developing the automobile culture was the Small and Grand Touring. Taking account of the development of leisure and tourism in the three different countries Denmark, Italy and Soviet Union, notwithstanding keen and clear differences in political organization, market expansion, civil relationships and social situation, we all point to the car as a keystone in the emergence of what can be characterized as a European Fordist leisure regime in the respective countries, fitting local and national practices and traditions. Important traits of this new regime were that of the mass market and that of mass transportation by granting gradually each individual citizen, and not only the wealthy ones, access to individual transportation in cars. The car

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<sup>74</sup> S. Sciaboldin, "Zhiguli", *L'Unione Sovietica*, no. 3 (1971): 40, 41, p. 41.

<sup>75</sup> Cf. Lewis H. Siegelbaum, *Cars for Comrades: The Life of the Soviet Automobile*, cit., p. 99: "Chosen as 'Russian automobile of the twentieth century' by readers of the country's most venerable car magazine, it was unquestionably the Soviet 'people's car,' whether by choice or for lack thereof. It's relatively low price and ease of repair explain its continued appeal".



became – in different historical periods and in very different ways – the consumers symbol of mobility, personal freedom of choice and individuality in all three countries.

## Summary

Comparative analysis of tourism and of its development in three different countries – Denmark, Italy and Soviet Union – has revealed the importance of car as the keystone for changes in the habits of leisure time consumption all over in Europe. Even considering the specific features (social, economic and political) of each country, and the different decades in which this phenomenon has occurred, “individual” travel and stay has become, in Twentieth Century, the characteristics of dominance over other forms of organized and “collective” tourism.

“Gentlemen, we do not make this tour to drive. We drive to make this tour”. In what Frederik Bagge, member of Danish Automobile Club board, said in 1907, there is already the spirit of the change: car was no more a simple means of transportation. Automobile was introduced and promoted in Denmark, through a consumption regime for leisure and recreation as a vehicle for promoting modern leisure life. Industry, consumers and their organisations played an important role in the construction of a cultural car-identity and in building a material reality that allegedly would benefit every citizen, from childhood to old age. Touring by automobile and for auto camping was developed as dominant consumption junctions in the years 1920-1970.

In Italy, increasing living standards, employment contracts that provided for periods of paid holidays and the coming on the market of small and cheap cars (and in the previous decade “scooters revolution”, as well), allowed, in mid-Fifties, even to the workers and the clerks, since then nearly excluded from holidays pleasure, to have access to “mass vacation”, representing both a new means of consumption and a status symbol. Owning a car made people more independent (at least apparently...) to decide the destination of your leisure time, no longer being tied to institutions, associations or political parties, following only their personal wishes.

A better mobility created also a new situation for Italian tourism by creating a national demand, transforming – sometimes radically – the landscape and the Italian “hospitality industry”, in order to satisfy the needs of a “democratic” holiday.

The Soviet State-Party had carefully considered what was preferable between public and private consumption and – clearly – chosen the first solution. Nevertheless, Soviet Government encouraged car production and in 1970 started producing the *Zhiguli*, known as *2101*. This car did not only represent a more comfortable means of transportation, but also embodied – despite collective Soviet politics – a “private” dream: a private property good for private use. It allowed, for the very first time, mobility (even if relative...) and freedom of travelling. Owning a car permitted to organize the leisure independently from the prearranged forms of leisure set by the State-Party. It allowed to drive to holiday places, to a *dacha* or simply to make an excursion. Considering the nature of Soviet geography and its endless countryside, the car was also an alternative to public transportation, a basic necessity in many cases. Even if the USSR went through a real mass motorization, *Zhiguli* is, still today, the first and last car for the masses.

## **Curriculum Vitae**

**Silvia Cassamagnaghi**

Post Doc

Relationship between Italian civil population and American soldiers during WWII and post war period

Ph.D. in Contemporary History

Mass media and American feminine models in post war Italy

Degree in Italian Literature (First Class Honours)

Contemporary History and History of Cinema

### **Topics:**

Media studies

Gender studies

Italian-American relationship

### **Publications:**

La guerra delle donne. Hollywood e il secondo conflitto mondiale, Milano, Cuem, 2008

Futuro al femminile. Donne che cambiano in un mondo che cambia, Milano, Rizzoli, 2007

Immagini dall'America. Mass Media e modelli femminili nell'Italia del secondo dopoguerra. 1945-1960,  
Milano, FrancoAngeli, 2007

“Relax Girls, U.S. Will Treat You Right. La spose italiane dei GI della seconda guerra mondiale”,  
in *AltreItalie*, n. 38-39, gennaio-dicembre 2009.

“Educazione e prevenzione. La nascita e l'attività dei consultori laici a Milano negli anni del centro-sinistra” in Carlo G. Lacaïta e Maurizio Punzo (a cura di), *Milano. Anni Sessanta. Dagli esordi del centro-sinistra alla contestazione*, Piero Lacaïta Editore, Manduria, 2008, pp. 581-605.

“Da quando te ne andasti. Come Hollywood ha parlato alle donne americane e le ha raccontate durante il secondo conflitto mondiale” in *Il giornale di Storia Contemporanea*, anno X, n. 2, dicembre 2007.

***Italia 1946: le donne al voto*, dossier a cura di Maria Chiara Fugazza e Silvia Cassamagnaghi, Milano, Istituto lombardo di storia contemporanea, 2006**

“New York nella stampa femminile italiana del secondo dopoguerra”, in *Storia Urbana*, n. 109, ottobre-dicembre 2005

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## **Main activities**

- Since January, 2010 I've been enrolled as a researcher in the research project of the association Memorial Italia promoted by the Italian Ministry of Arts and Culture: “L'Emigrazione e la presenza politica russa in Italia. 1900-1939” (“Russian Emigration and Political Presence in Italy.1900-1939”).
- Since April, 2010 I've been enrolled in the “PRIN” (“Research Programs of Considerable National Interest”) project between four Italian universities “*Consumi e benessere in Italia in una prospettiva comparata (1945-2007)*” (“*Consumptions and well-being in Italy in a comparative perspective, 1945-2007*”). I work in the unity of the University of Milan coordinated by prof. Emanuela Scarpellini (University of Milan) “*I consumi della vita quotidiana fra Italia e Usa: analisi culturale e sociale (1945-2007)*” (“*Consumptions of the daily life between Italy and USA: cultural and social analysis*”).
- 3 July, 2009: I defended the doctoral thesis *Consumi e livelli di benessere nell'Unione Sovietica di Michail S. Gorbačëv. Strategie e cultura (Consumptions and well-being standards in Soviet Union under Mikhail S. Gorbachev). The work is the result of the doctoral programme “Società europea e vita internazionale nell'età moderna e contemporanea” (“European Society and international life in the modern and contemporary age”) of the Department of History and Historical Documentation Sciences of the University of Milan, coordinated by prof. Paola Vismara. Tutors of the thesis: prof. Emanuela Scarpellini, prof. Roberto Romano and prof. Giulia Lami. I've been enrolled in the doctoral programme in the Academic year 2005/06.*
- Since 2009: I collaborate with the association Italy-Russia Lombardy organizing cultural activities and events.
- Academic year 2007/08: tutor for the University programme “*Humanistic Sciences of Communication*”, University of Milan.
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- Since the Academic Year 2005/06 I have been working at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Milan, offering my collaboration in the course “Russian Culture” coordinated by Professor Gian Piero Piretto and in the courses “History of the Slavic Countries” and “History of Eastern Europe” coordinated by Professor Giulia Lami.
- Since the Academic Year 2005/06 I have been enrolled as doctoral student in the international history research group of the European Union “CLIOHRES.net” (“Creating Links and Innovative Overviews for a New History Research Agenda for the Citizens of a Growing Europe”), in the Thematic Work Group 3 “Religious and philosophical concepts”.
- December 10, 2004: I graduated with honours (110/110 e lode) in History (History of Eastern Europe), University of Milan, with a graduate thesis *La politica dei consumi in Unione Sovietica nell'epoca chruščëviana (Consumption Policy in Soviet Union in the Khrushchev Age)*. My tutor was Professor Giulia Lami and my co-tutor Professor Gian Piero Piretto.

## Publications

- *Politica e cultura dei consumi in Unione Sovietica nell'epoca chruščëviana*, «Esamizdat» (2005 (III) 2-3), pp. 93-109.
- *Nostalgie e retaggi iconografici sovietici nella Berlino contemporanea*, in E. Banchelli (ed.), *Taste the East. Forme e linguaggi dell'Ostalgie*, Bergamo 2006, pp. 199-223.
- Translations from Russian to Italian of three Russian historians' works: Viktor V. Kondrašin: *Generale e particolare nel movimento contadino in Russia negli anni 1917-1922 ed in quelli della Prima rivoluzione*; Jaroslav V. Leont'ev: *Radici sociali e ruolo politico del partito dei socialisti rivoluzionari*; Valerij P. Ljubin: *La rivoluzione del 1905-1907 e il raffreddamento dei rapporti russo-italiani all'inizio del XX secolo (sulla base dei materiali degli archivi russi)*; in G. Lami (ed.), *1905: L'altra rivoluzione russa*, Milano 2007.
- *Lenin and his body: a case of Soviet religiosity*, in J. Carvalho (ed.), *Religion and power in Europe: conflict and convergence*, Pisa 2007, pp. 279-296.
- G. Moretto, *Perestroika and the Russian Orthodox Church: a new approach to religion*, pp. 180-183, in G. Lami, G. Moretto, R. L. Genov, *Religious Life in an Atheist State*, in H. Gudmundur (a cura di), *Discrimination and Tolerance in Historical Perspective*, Pisa, 2008, pp. 169-185.

## In course of publication

- *The Leningrad State Museum of History of Religion and Atheism: A Struggle against Religion*, in J. Carvalho (ed.), *Routines of existence: Time, Life and After Life in Society and Religion*, Pisa, 2010.

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## CV

MA 1986 (thesis and studies in the historiography of technology) Department of History at the University of Aarhus.  
Assistant lecturer in the humanities and the new technology, University of Aarhus 1982-84.  
Assistant lecturer in technology and society, Aalborg University 1987-1991.  
Research assistant, Aalborg University 1990-92.  
PhD-student 1992-95, Department of History at the University of Aarhus.

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Doctor's degree in Philosophy, University of Aarhus 1999. Associate Professor in modern history at the Institute for History, International and Social Studies at Aalborg University 1997-2000.  
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Editor, *Den jyske Historiker* 1982-. Managing editor 1988-1997.  
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Member of the advisory committee for museums on modern History for the Cultural Heritage Foundation under the Ministry of Culture 2007-  
Member of the bibliometric commission for history 2007-  
Peer reviewer for ESF (European Science Foundation) 2008-

### **Relevant publications:**

*Det polytekniske gennembrud. Romantikens teknologiske konstruktion 1780-1850.* Oxford, 1999.  
(Doctoral dissertation on the construction of the polytechnic Institute in Denmark).

Teknokrati uden teknokratisme - polyteknikerstandens tredje standpunkt, professionalisme og moderniseringsstrategier 1840-1940. M. Rostgaard, M.F. Wagner, (eds.): *Lederskab i Dansk Industri og Samfund 1880-1960.* Aalborg, 2000, p. 129-175.

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